

# PGRS TRACKIN'



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## Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society – May 2015

Editor: Scott Williams

### Happy May PGRS Members

Hope you are all doing well and enjoying this beautiful weather. The April 1<sup>st</sup> Board Member meeting was held at Fran and Marge Monahan's home in Etowah and was a *very* productive one indeed.

The first order of business was to plan the summer get-together, or "Train-Fest" for July. Don Watson, our Secretary/Treasurer, will try and reserve the conference room in Greer SC again at Brushy Creek as the directors all felt the amenities and central location were optimal. No club business is planned to be discussed at this meet. The idea is just to get together for comradery, a swap meet, "drag-n-brag", and there are three clinics planned at this time. There will definitely be a seminar on Track Laying and Wiring Basics and another seminar will be on converting Locos from Track to Battery Power and installing Sound Cards. Tentatively, the third seminar will be on Buildings and Structures for use outdoors in the garden. The meet will run from 10-4 on a Saturday in July and rather than break the pace of the meeting to go get lunch somewhere and wander back in we will pick up deli trays and salads and beverages and you may of course feel free to bring something to share as well, especially if you want something in particular. We felt that breaking for lunch and then straggling back in willy-nilly would destroy the schedule so we're going with a light, working lunch instead. A heads up however, **accurate RSVPs** later on when the meeting is announced will be a really big help to properly plan to provide for the very best quality luncheon so your cooperation will be most appreciated when we announce the exact date for the meet-up.

Other issues discussed by the Board include finding a website designer to work with for an on-line PGRS website. Pete Gendron and I will be seeking out designers and comparing services and costs. The initial goal is to put up a basic, but classy looking, website that tells the general public in brief words, but **lots** of quality photos [all of your layouts and trains will be considered for that], who the PGRS is and what we're all about and club contact info. A website we all would be proud to share with family, friends, and colleagues is the mutual goal. We also hope to provide a "members only" tab to click on and paid members will be given an annual password to access private club announcements as well as the current monthly newsletter and possibly also past issues of the newsletter. Simple to start with but emphasis on classy looking and complete with no "under construction" dead ends or useless/empty tabs.

Open Houses and “Mini-Open Houses” were also discussed. Currently we have 4 members who have said they will host Open Houses this year, either by themselves or with a co-host which is a very good way to split the prep and cleanup duties for a club get-together. We encourage ALL members to consider hosting open houses no matter how fancy/complete or rudimentary and design stage, they may feel their garden layout project is at the current time and, **as always**, the club will offer some re-imbusement for expenses incurred in hosting the open house event. If you were not aware, you need not foot the entire bill to have club members come for a visit. *This is part of what joining the PGRS is all about.* **Facilitating Garden Train Comradery**. We currently have just shy of 60 paid up members and monies from previous years so there is capital for the webpage development and open houses. You may think your layout of a basic loop in your backyard with maybe just some dreams of turnouts going here and there is not worthy of having folks come visit but no, not the case at all. A garden train layout in its early stages is a **perfect time** to have friends come by and hang out, sip a beverage and help you dream and plan how it might grow. Bill Huntman has agreed to work as liaison to facilitate open houses and help any member who thinks he or she might like to have friends stop by for an open house: [whuntman@gmail.com](mailto:whuntman@gmail.com). Future newsletters will give the exact dates/times/directions for the July meet as well as the open houses.

A “Mini-Open House” is a new phrase we have coined that kind of goes along with the Train Lover’s Luncheon idea of a smaller, more localized get together within the broader PGRS club umbrella, to facilitate more informal get-togethers...i.e.: “Mini-Open Houses” are smaller, more localized meet-ups that we are trying to incubate. Open to all members and their friends, they are not a PGRS planned event. Think of them like a ‘pick-up’ game of Softball planned with little notice. The idea is to work with your local Train Lover’s Luncheon coordinators to have people over very informally, with little planning and prep. We have done this on afternoons when TLLs were scheduled where after the luncheon broke up we caravanned over to someone’s home to inspect progress on their layout and/or offer advice on a quandary they had run in to in the construction or operation of their layout. It’s been a fun networking tool.

Thanks for reading,

Scott

### **Apple Valley Railroad open invitation letter to PGRS Members:**

Hi PGRS Members,

As some of you may or may not know, The Apple Valley HO Model Railroad Club has started to build a large scale railroad on Gauge 1 track, behind its home at the Hendersonville Railroad Depot on the former passenger loading area. The Depot is located at the corner of Maple St. and 7th Ave. We call the railroad the Pisgah Valley RR. It is elevated about 30" above ground and measures about 12'x60'. We have one mainline loop of track with a separate branch line that departs off the mainline to an upper level switchback that serves a logging camp at one end and a future gravel loading facility at the other. We use two Crest Revolution train control systems to control track power, one for the mainline and the other for the upper level and we also run battery operated engines as well.

The HO railroad inside the Depot as well as the Pisgah Valley RR is open to the public free of charge every Wednesday and Saturday. **There are only a few Apple Valley members who are interested in Large scale at this time so we could use some help running the railroad. That being said, the Apple Valley Club would like to extend an open invitation to all PGRS members, wives, friends etc. to run their equipment on the Pisgah Valley on the 4th Saturday of every month.** This would be an informal meet, just show up if you want to come.

The Depot hours for the public are 10am to 2pm however we have the building open by 9am and we can run trains until 4 pm or longer so you should feel free to show up at any time between those hours. The building has restrooms, water fountain, parking on Maple St, a few eating establishments within walking distance or bring your own lunch. It might be a good idea for PGRS members to wear their name tags if you plan on coming.

**The Apple Valley has both track power and battery power engines and plenty of rolling stock with Kadee couplers for your use if needed.**

We look forward to having you join us for a fun day of railroading.

Thanks,

Terry Ketcham



[Editor's note]: Photo of the Pisgah Valley RR., currently under construction and operable on the former passenger loading dock of the Southern Train Station at the Hendersonville Depot.

Come visit, bring trains if you wish, and take advantage of the AVRR's generous invitation to run trains on their new layout and meet a bunch of really great folks at the Apple Valley Railroad on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month.

### **HobbyTown USA discount:**

HobbyTown has reward points at the Asheville and Johnson City store which is operated by the same person where you receive points for each dollar spent that will give you a future discount. They have, in addition to that, a 10% off discount on all purchases for club members. **Tell them you belong to PGRS** when you're at the register for discount. If you're near one of their SC stores then you may wish to inquire if they have the same discounts.

### **Removing lettering from Bachmann models:**

Per a recent discussion I started to research methods of removing stock lettering from Bachmann plastic. I found several methods on line, from using 91% isopropyl alcohol, brushing on gelled alcohol fuel [sterno], MicroSol/Solvaset, and nail polish remover and "Goof Off". I decided to experiment on a Bachman B&O Big Hauler cab and will share my results. First I tried using Magic Flame which is similar to Sterno and just what I happened to have on hand. The anecdotal account I had read said that the gelled alcohol could be applied judiciously to lettering with a brush and would stay only where you wanted it and within 5 minutes you could wipe the lettering from the plastic using an ink eraser or damp sponge or toothbrush with no damage to the plastic. I experimented with different times and also on an N scale car I had and the Magic Flame did absolutely nothing at all no matter how long I let it sit, even up to 8 hours. Magic Flame is just Methanol whereas Sterno claims to be Methanol and Ethanol so maybe the ethanol is the stronger solvent. Anyway, it did nothing for me. Then I tried letting 91% alcohol sit in a puddle on top of the lettering. It softened the lettering on the Bachmann cab in just 5 minutes and I wiped the lettering off using a damp sponge with a bit of scrubbing. It did not damage the plastic surface and removed the lettering. After allowing the piece to dry I discovered it had pulled pigment out of different spots on the cab where alc. had splashed and left them 'whitish'. The alcohol did nothing to the lettering on the N scale car but it did leave a whitish area in one spot of the car. Solvaset soaking for the same 5 minutes as the iso alcohol did nothing. Longer soaking also proved to be useless. I had heard acetone nail polish remover or Goof Off both would remove the paint but was a little wary of their effects on plastic surfaces. I put 100% acetone on the corner of a damp sponge and rubbed it on the lettering. It almost immediately wiped off the letters but upon inspecting the sponge I saw what appeared to be some of the blue plastic rubbed off on to the sponge so I would thin the acetone down if possible or buy a weaker strength version than what I used and use it very lightly. Goof Off "Pro-Strength" according to my can is Acetone AND Xylene. When I tried a little of that it lifted even more of the blue pigment from the surface so I would definitely

steer clear of that for plastic surfaces. I have used Ronsonol lighter fuel in the past to clean magic marker off of plastic surfaces. It is a Petroleum distillate. I tried it on the cab both scrubbing with it and soaking the surface for a few minutes but it appeared to not yield any results.

So, as always, your mileage may vary but it appears 91% alcohol and acetone yield the easiest results without warping or crazing the surface but you may wish to experiment on the inside/backside of your plastic possibly and be very careful using both solvents and still have to repaint the surface after removing the lettering, especially if you encounter any of the white spotting that I did.

**\*\*Trivia Question\*\***

*Where did the “G” come from in the widely used term “G Scale” and what does it mean?*

\*answer at end of the newsletter\*

**Upcoming Events:**

Saturday & Sunday, May 30 – 31, 2015

The Train Collectors Association Southeastern Division Toy Train Sale

Kerr Scott Building, NC State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, North Carolina

Hours: 10:00am – 3:30pm

Admission: 13 years and up: \$6.00 (\$5.00 with flyer or newspaper ad)

Under 13 with adult — Free

<http://www.se-tca.org/>

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June 5 – 6, 2015 Greenville SC NMRA show.

Palmetto Excursion

National Model Railroad Association (NMRA)

Southeastern Region 2015 Convention

<http://palmetto-excursion.org/>

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June 6, 10am – 5pm

George Washington's Train Show  
The Clifton Forge School of the Arts  
518 Church St., Clifton Forge VA

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June 20th on Saturday in Charlotte, NC [VERIFY]

12th Carolina Rail Fair  
Saturday, June 20, 2015  
Building 1, Metrolina Expo Center  
Charlotte, NC

### **Member photos;**

Please send some of your photos so I can post them in future newsletters to [flatrat@charter.net](mailto:flatrat@charter.net)

Thanks!!

### **Train Lover Luncheons:**

As mentioned at the annual meeting and in previous newsletters, informal lunch get togethers have been formed to get groups of train enthusiasts in local regions together once a month for lunch and light conversation regarding all things 'Train'. These are not a club function but an informal get together to talk about all scales of trains, even 1:1. No fee, just show up and feel free to bring friends who are also interested in trains.

There are currently three monthly meetings taking place; Asheville and Columbus N.C. along with Simpsonville S.C. They meet at a centrally located restaurant on a set date and time each month. Everyone pays for his own meal and the conversation is open and easy with no agenda other than the common interests of the group. **TRAINS!** To date the attendance has ranged from two to about sixteen and by all reports has been enjoyable networking and conversation.

The current luncheons are:

Columbus Area: Meets every Third Thursday of every month at Larkins Carolina Grill, 155 West Mills Street in Columbus, NC 28722. @ 1:00 PM. Contact Gary Poague 828-712-3429  
gpoague@windstream.net

Greater Greenville Area: Meeting the first Tuesday of every month - at 12 noon. [It has been moved to Mutts in Greer as it is more centrally located for the greater Greenville area.](#) Contact Ken Majchrzak at: [kemajchrzak@gmail.com](mailto:kemajchrzak@gmail.com) or call Ken at: 864-385-4951

Asheville Area: Meets the 4th Thursday each month. We meet at 11:30 AM at Gondolier Italian Restaurant and Pizza located at 1360 Tunnel Road, Asheville 28805. Contact Tim Wagner [timwagner2012@gmail.com](mailto:timwagner2012@gmail.com)

The location is on the east end near the VA hospital, so it is recommended that you access Tunnel Road from I-40, exit 55. Take a left at the first light after you exit and a left at the next light. The venue will be on the right a few hundred yards from the intersection.

If you are interested in starting a "Train Lover's Luncheon" in your area, call a couple of friends and agree to meet. The next month everybody invites another friend, etc. Should you need more information, call Bill Huntman; [whunteman@gmail.com](mailto:whunteman@gmail.com) or 828-400-9982 (cell).

Winston Salem luncheons are currently being planned by Tony Potter and J.R. Snider.

Charlotte luncheons are currently being planned by Hank Paulson and Dave Smith.

\*We encourage members to use the local network created by the TLLs to casually invite folks by to share your layout and train projects, either on the day of a TLL or just any day in the month you would like to have some company. Email or call your TLL coordinator who can then email the local group of friends that you'd like to have some visitors.

### **Membership:**

Please feel free to share this newsletter with friends who might be interested and if they wish to become members ask them to contact the PGRS Secretary/Treasurer for a membership form.

Don Watson  
125 Mistletoe Trail  
Hendersonville, NC 28791

[docwatson@morrisbb.net](mailto:docwatson@morrisbb.net)

## Business Related to Our Hobby

Any Member who has a business related to our hobby is welcome to submit an entry for inclusion in PGRS Trackin' each month.



**Peggy Keyes**  
Owner / Chief Conductor  
RightTrackTrainMuseum@gmail.com  
828/625-5551

**The Right Track Toy Train Museum**  
A non-profit museum to benefit Pancreatic Cancer research  
2414 Memorial Hwy (Rte 64/74)  
Lake Lure, NC 28746  
Find us on Facebook!



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Old Trains Wanted

### Jim's Train Sales

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Etowah, North Carolina 28729

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Email: [jhh1218@att.net](mailto:jhh1218@att.net)  
Phone: (828) 891-7570  
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**\*\*Trivia Question:** Where did the “G” come from in the widely used term “G Scale” and what does it mean?

Hint:



Answer:

LGB [Lehman Gross Bahn] introduced the term G scale in 1968 from the middle word of the company name. Lehman is the surname of the founder Erntz Paul Lehman. The word “Gross” is the German word for large, big, or great. Bahn is the German word for road, route or train. The popular term “Garden Scale Trains” is not the original source of “G Scale” and is a more recent term for large scale model trains. So when friends ask what G scale stands for tell them “Gross”. It should be good for a chuckle if nothing else.

G scale is a term often used to describe all large scale model trains that run on Gauge 1, or 45mm track from 1:20.3 to 1:32, even though the term is inaccurate, it has stuck, and trying to explain or debate the differences, especially to ‘non-model railroaders’ leads to glazed over looks or aching heads. If you want to blow their minds further also tell them about SE [7/8ths] 1:13.7 scale model trains which use Gauge 1 track to model 2 foot gauge railroads. If anyone knows a better way to answer the oft asked question of “What scale is that?” then please let me know as that would be helpful information.

The scale Lehman chose is 1:22.5 to model European trains that ran on metre gauge, i.e. 3 feet, 3-3/8 inch width. Europe, like America, had numerous widths of narrow gauge railway tracks, some so narrow it’s hard to understand how the trains stayed upright in a stiff breeze and going on up to, and beyond the Standard gauge of 4 feet, 8-1/2 inches as it currently is in the U.S. and Europe both. (also called Stephenson gauge after George Stephenson, International gauge or normal gauge). This is not the largest gauge however as several countries also use track gauges of from 5 to 7 feet referred to as broad gauge. If all this is clear and simple to you then maybe you can explain it to me.